

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-06

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SECSTATE WASHDC 7952

DIA WASHDC

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

USINT ALGIERS

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

USINT DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

USCINCEUR

S E C R E T BEIRUT 5740

LIMDIS

JERUSALEM FOR SECRETARY'S PARTY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, XF, LE

SUBJECT: TROUBLE AHEAD FOR LEBANON

SUMMARY: REPEATED ISRAELI ATTACKS ON TARGETS IN LEBANON
IN CONTEXT ANNOUNCED ISRAELI HARD LINE TOWARD PALESTINIANS HAVE
CAUSED SIGNIFICANT CASUALTIES AMONG NON-COMBATTANT PALESTINIANS
AND LEBANESE CIVILIANS AS WELL AS SOME LOSSES AMONG FEDAYEEN.
RESULT TO DATE HAS BEEN TO INCREASE PALESTINIAN ANGER TOWARD
ISRAEL, AND INCREASE LEBANESE POPULAR RE SENTMENT VS. ISRAEL,

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AND GOL, AND INCREASE IN PROBLEMS FOR GOL BUT NOT

RPT NOT TO BRING ANY VISIBLE MOVEMENT BY GOL TOWARD POSSIBILITY OF ARMED CONFRONTATION WITH FEDAYEEN. GOL ANTICIPATES FURTHER INCREASE IN ITS PROBLEMS WITH PALESTINIANS AND ISRAEL AFTER ISRAELI-SYRIAN DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT AND IS CONSULTING WITH OTHER ARAB GOVTS. IN SEARCH OF SUPPORT. ALTHOUGH WE CAN UNDERSTAND REASONS FOR PRESENT ISRAELI POLICY RE FEDAYEEN, PALESTINIANS AND

LEBANON, WE DO NOT BELIEVE IT WILL PROVE ANY MORE EFFECTIVE THAN IT HAS IN PAST AND ITS COUNTER-PRODUCTIVITY WILL INCREASE. THEREFORE WE SUGGEST THAT AT APPROPRIATE TIME USG MIGHT WISH DISCUSS ENTIRE QUESTION WITH GOI. END SUMMARY.

1. ISRAELI NAVAL ATTACK ON PALESTINIAN REFUGEE CAMP NEAR TYR ON MAY 19, SPEECHES MAY 20 BY MRS. MEIR, DAYAN AND BEGIN AND ISRAELI AIR ATTACKS OF MAY 21 APPEAR TO LEBANESE AS CLEAR SIGNAL THAT GOI, IN AFTERMATH OF MA'ALOT, HAS TAKEN FIRM DECISION TO POLICY ADOPTED AFTER MUNICH BUT ABANDONED BY MID-1973 OF STRIKING "TERRORISTS" WHEREVER THEY ARE FOUND, USING VARIETY METHODS INCLUDING STRIKES ON REFUGEE CAMPS WHICH, AS IN 1972-73, ALMOST ALWAYS PRODUCE NO MILITARY RESULTS BUT LARGE NUMBER INNOCENT VICTIMS AMONG PALESTINIANS AND OFTEN AMONG LEBANESE. AS RESULT STRONG IMPRESS-

ION LEFT WITH PALESTINIANS IS THAT ONLY GOOD PALESTINIAN IS DEAD ONE. LEBANESE POPULATION ANGRY AT ISRAEL, AND GOL. WHILE BASIC ANTI-PATHY TOWARD FEDAYEEN REMAINS MANY LEBANESE NOW FEEL SORRY FOR THEM.

2. ALTHOUGH WE CAN UNDERSTAND WHY GOI LEADERS MAY BELIEVE THEY HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO MAKE STATEMENTS SUCH AS THOSE OF MAY 20, AND TO FOLLOW AGGRESSIVE POLICY OF TAKING ATTACK TO FEDAYEEN, OUR DOUBTS AS TO EFFCACY OF THIS SORT OF ACTION VIS-A-VIS FEDAYEEN IN LEBANON AND GOL AND ARMY REMAIN AS STATED BEIRUT 5573. THIS APPLIES PARTICULARLY TO RATHER INDISCRIMINATE ATTACKS ON REFUGEE CAMPS, LEBANESE BORDER VILLAGES AND SOME TIME FEDAYEEN ENCAMPMENTS NEAR VILLAGES.

3. NET SHORT-TERM EFFECT OF RECENT ISRAELI ATTACKS ON REFUGEE CAMPS AND OTHER TARGETS AND OFFICIAL GOI STATEMENTS RE TERRORISTS APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN INCREASED MILITANCY ON PART FEDAYEEN LEADERS, INCLUDING THOSE FROM MORE MODERATE FATAH ORGANIZATION, DECLINE OF MODERATE INFLUENCE, AND SOMEWHAT MORE AGGRESSIVE REACTION OF LEBANESE.

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SE ARMY IN REPLYING TO IDF ATTACKS AND/OR BORDER INCURSIONS. THIS

REFLECTS PRESENT MOOD OF POLITICAL LEADERS, SINCE EVEN MARONITE DEPUTIES ARE CALLING FOR ACQUISITION OF SAM AIR DEFENSE SYSTEM. RECENT ISRAELI OVERFLIGHTS OF BEIRUT HAVE BEEN REGULARLY GREETED BY ANTI-AIRCRAFT FIRE WHEN BEFORE THERE WAS USUALLY NONE. SEA ATTACK ON RACHIDIYEH CAMP WAS MET BY RETURN FIRE FROM ALL AVAILABLE LEBANESE ARTILLERY,

APPARENTLY WITH INTENT HIT ATTACKING VESSELS IF AT ALL POSSIBLE. IDF PATROLS MOVING IN LEBANESE TERRITORY IN ARKUB AREA ALSO SEEM BE RECEIVING MORE AND CLOSER FIRE FROM LEBANESE ARMY WHOSE UNITS NOW APPEAR TO BE NEARER TO BORDER AND IN GREATER STRENGTH THAN RECENT PAST. IDF, AS IS ITS CUSTOM WHEN FIRED UPON FROM WHAT-EVER SOURCE, IS RESPONDING IN KIND AND TAKING CLOSER AIM, AND IN MOST RECENT INCIDENT ON MAY 20 NEAR CHEBAA IN ARKUB, LIGHTLY WOUNDED FIVE LEBANESE SOLDIERS.

4. IAF MAY 21 ATTACKS ON TARGETS WHICH APPARENTLY BELIEVED TO BE FEDAYEEN CAMPS IN ARKUB AND NEAR TYR IN SOUTHWEST LEBANON CAUSED FEW CASUALTIES AMONG FEDAYEEN AND PALESTINIANS (MOST OF WHOM HAVE MOVED FROM OLD HAUNTS SINCE IAF BEGAN WIDE-RANGING STRIKES AFTER KIRYAT SHIMONA) BUT DID RESULT IN DEATH OF THREE LEBANESE CHILDREN, WITH THREE CHILDREN AND TWO OLD PERSONS SERIOUSLY WOUNDED AND FIFTEEN OTHER LEBANESE CIVILIANS LESS SERIOUSLY WOUNDED. HOSTILITY OF LOCAL POPULACE, MANY OF WHOM HAVE ALSO LEFT THEIR HOMES AS RESULT CONSTANT ISRAELI SHELLING AND AIR ATTACKS, HAS NOT TO DATE PRODUCED ANY SIGN THAT GOL MIGHT BE FORCED INTO ARMED CONFRONTATION WITH FEDAYEEN SUCH AS OCCURRED IN MAY 1973. QUITE TO THE CONTRARY WE SEE SIGNS OF MOMENTARY IMPROVED FEDAYEEN LEBANESE ARMY RELATIONS.

5. GOL IS AWARE OF LIKELIHOOD LEBANON WILL FACE STILL GREATER PROBLEMS FROM ISRAEL, FEDAYEEN AND RADICAL ARAB STATES (I.E., IRAQ AND LIBYA) FOLLOWING ISRAELI-SYRIAN DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT, GOVT. FEARS THAT UNDER PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES FEDAYEEN WILL FEEL THEY HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO STEP-UP ACTIONS VS. ISRAEL, CONCENTRATING WHERE POSSIBLE ON INSIDE OPERATIONS. ISRAELI POLICY OF RETALIATION ALREADY TOUGHER THAN IT HAS BEEN SINCE RIGHT AFTER MUNICH (AND LOD) TRAGEDIES. AND IRAQ AND LIBYA WILL IN ALL PROBABILITY BE USING THEIR POLITICAL, HUMAN AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES ENCOURAGE FEDAYEEN TO ATTACK ISRAEL AND TAKE INTRANSIGENT ATTITUDE RE POLITICAL SETTLEMENT.

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THEIR OBJECTIVE WOULD BE TO CREATE ENOUGH TROUBLE BETWEEN ISRAEL, PALESTINIANS AND LEBANON TO THREATEN DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT AND GENEVA CONFERENCE.

6. IN ANTICIPATION OF THIS ONSLAUGHT, GOL IS BEGINNING CONSULT CLOSELY WITH OTHER ARAB GOVTS. TO SEE WHAT SUPPORT IT CAN FIND, BEGINNING WITH MEETING OF ARAB LEAGUE DEFENSE AND FOREIGN MINISTERS WHICH JUST ENDED IN CAIRO. WE SHALL TRY KEEP ABREAST OF PROGRESS GOL CONSULTATIONS, AND OF PROBLEMS WHICH DEVELOP INSIDE LEBANON. WE WOULD APPRECIATE INFO WHICH OTHER ADDRESSEES MIGHT BE ABLE DEVELOP ON THIS, PARTICULARLY CAIRO, DAMASCUS AND JIDDA.

7. VIEW FOREGOING RECOMMEND DISCUSSION AT APPROPRIATE TIME AND LEVEL WITH GOI OF ITS INTENTIONS RE

FEDAYEEN, PALESTINIANS AND LEBANON. AS NOTED ABOVE, AND BORNE
OUT IN PAST, APPARENT ISRAELI POLICY OF REPEATED ATTACKS ON TARGETS
IN LEBANON UNLIKELY HAVE ANY POSITIVE EFFECT ON WHAT ARAB
TERRORISTS DO INSIDE ISRAEL BUT IS LIKELY HAVE NEGATIVE EFFECT
ON PALESTINIANS, LEBANESE AND PERHAPS OTHER ARAB STATES RESULTING
IN INCREASED TERRORISM IN ISRAEL. GODLEY

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